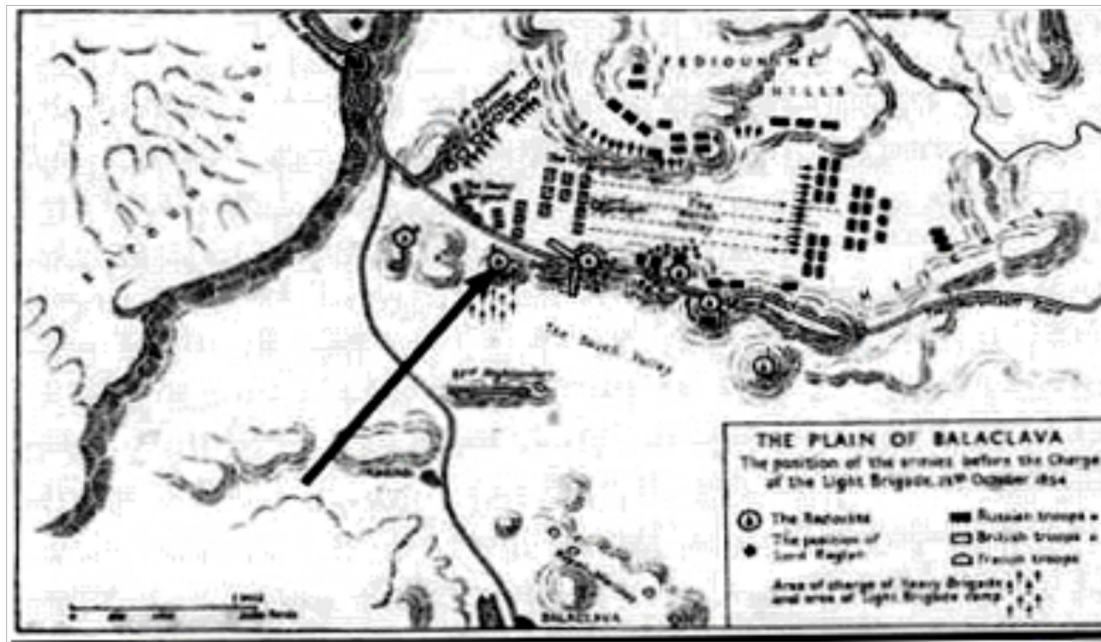


The Battle of Balaklava and the 4th Chasseurs d'Afrique : Corrections

by Dr Douglas J Austin 19 [TWC 27(1) p17 2009]

Further to my recent article in this journal [Volume 26, Number 3, pp. 32-38 (October 2008)], I am obliged to Major Colin Robins for pointing out my error concerning the British gunners responsible for the 12-pounder weapons in the Causeway Heights Redoubts. His detailed information is most useful. I must differ with him, however, as regards the 5th Redoubt (located where the present British Balaklava Monument stands). Bapst's account, as read, incorrectly implied that all five Redoubts were occupied throughout the day. He did not record that No. 5 was unoccupied at day-break.



John Blunt (Lucan's interpreter) and W. H. Russell clarified the situation. I quote from CWRSP33 '*Blunt Speaking*' by D J Austin:-

p 25 : "Shortly after this brilliant feat [The Thin Red Line], I saw, while I was attending to the Turkish stragglers, a dense body of Russian Cavalry, some 3,000 strong - as estimated at the Cavalry Head Quarters at the time - suddenly appear on the ridge of hillocks above the Waranzoff road and slowly advance in the direction of redoubt No. 5, which was not armed or garrisoned at the time."

p 28 : "As my Russian Charger was becoming restive and excited by the trumpet calls and gun firing, I endeavoured to direct it down the hill towards our camp, but I felt I was losing all control over the animal, for suddenly it swerved round and galloped at breakneck speed towards the Waranzoff (sic) road. I could not stop it, my hands got quite sore from pulling at its bridle and I felt very uncomfortable. Most fortunately, the beast in its mad career, and frightened by the enemy's shells bursting in our direction, came up to redoubt No. 5 and in attempting to leap over its narrow trench, stumbled and pitched me on its low parapet or embankment. Just as I got on my legs and was about to jump into the redoubt, a Turkish soldier in rushing forward to assist me was struck and killed on the spot by a splinter of a shell."

p 28 : "In carrying an order early in the day, Mr. Blunt, Lord Lucan's interpreter, and son of our Consul in Thessaly, had a narrow escape. His horse was killed; he seized a Russian charger as it

galloped past riderless, but the horse carried him almost into the Russian cavalry, and he only saved himself by leaping him into a redoubt among a number of frightened Turks who were praying to Allah on their bellies. I should mention here that the Turks who had been collected on the flanks of the 93d fled at the approach of the Russians without firing a shot!”

[W H Russell’s report, printed in ‘*The Times*’ for November 14th 1854.]

p 29 : “The horse got on its legs and galloped away over the Waranzoff road and across the valley in the direction of the Fedoukhine heights opposite the redoubts No. 4 and 5. Redoubt No. 5 was smaller and of weaker construction than the others. It had no guns and it was not garrisoned till shortly after the charge of the Heavy Brigade, when the Turkish Commander Rustem Pasha, after consulting with Sir Colin Campbell, occupied it with about 200 of his men. Several Turks were killed and some were wounded in this redoubt by the fire of the enemy’s artillery from the Fedoukhine heights, and Rustem Pasha, who was outside the redoubt with his orderly, had his horse wounded. ”

The accounts by Blunt and Russell appear to confirm that Redoubt 5 was occupied from ca. 10.15 a.m.